

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

MEMORANDUM RE: Aeolian-Skinner Organ

TO: Robert S. Bowditch

FROM: John R. King

Date: November 21, 1964

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Most of the organ, at least some three-quarters, has been built in a thorough and artistic manner. In particular the flutes and mutations and most of the Diapason chorus work are fine. However, each of the following matters should be resolved before the organ is accepted and before the guarantee period begins.--

1. Many sets of pipes, particularly reeds, are uneven in loudness and quality even within octaves.

2. Swell Spitzviol & Celeste,-- unsatisfactory tone, lacks character, too much like other stops.

3. Celeste in the pair above tuned at a pitch aggravating the fuzziness. Replace both sets.

4. Major Trumpet -- unsatisfactory tone. Five people's comments: "Blatant, not commanding," "Not noble in tone, strident, loudness tapers off," "Pinched in tone," "Not impressive," "More like a child's than a man's trumpet."

5. Swell Trompette still slower in speech than other stops, though speech has been speeded up.

6. Great Diapason chorus 8'-4'-2' should be both louder than that of the open Swell and without sacrifice of good tone. Great should be bright and distinctly contrasted with Swell in volume. Great 8' seems to have been broadened in tone at the expense of relative brightness.

7. Choir Cromorne disappointing. Somewhat pinched, an uncomfortable sound. Probably parts or the whole of each pipe should be replaced with a somewhat different design though similar.

8. Pedal Bourdons 16' & 8' ineffective as to loudness, it having been originally agreed that this should be mid-way between Gemshorn (softer) & Principal (louder). Contract was undertaken for so many pipes for whole organ in a specified space. Bourdons in wrong place.

9. Pedal Gemshorn 4' (in contract and operating in early November) should be hooked up to the spare draw stop (Pedal) mechanism provided for and installed under price on contract. Because Pedal 16' stops generally are buried too far back at the sides (see No. 8 above), builder partly alleviated condition by separating the Pedal 4-rank Mixture into a 3-rank and (substituting somewhat larger pipes) a separate Quint 5 - 1/3'. The separate Quint should have been hooked on to the spare draw-stop action specifically provided for additions. Instead the useful Pedal Gemshorn 4' (not existing elsewhere at that pitch) was made inoperative.

10. Contract price provides for 61 pipes in Positiv ranks (for each rank), the same as with Great, Swell & Choir. Correspondence promises this for the Positiv in its present position. 61 notes are provided for in console, remote control, and mechanism up to Positiv chest, and the Positive chest is also a 61-note chest. 40 more pipes (in 8 sets) are needed to complete this matter, along with the necessary holes to be bored in the racks and other installation procedures.

11. Heights of manual keys need adjustment; they are now at varying heights.

12. Combination pistons and cancellers uneven in effect changing positions of tablets & stops.

13. General Crescendo pedal additions not made as listed.

14. Full organ piston does not key into crescendo as agreed.

15. Fine tuning not complete on all stops.

16. Choir Viola Celeste probably tuned at an interval from Viola Pomposa producing fuzzy effect.

17. Roll top is very stiff.

18. Items reported by Gordon Gurney, 11/19/64. -- Dust cover over primaries of key action Pos chest broken; it should be held together with round head screws rather than present screw tabs. Dust cover offset Gr chest, C# side, left off. Wiring to Pos tremolo sloppy. Pos trem not adjusted properly, i.e., belt slack. Ch trem same. Sw trem same. Maj. Trum.--one pipe unsupported. Boxes are noisy. Sw engine--air leaks..

19. The above list does not mean that other faults may not be discovered. Currently there is a list of cyphers, pipes that are dumb, and other matters requiring attention.

20. The writer personally feels that the Swell Trumpets (particularly the 8') are not "important" enough and could also be made fierier" as was envisaged in conversation with Mr. Whiteford. If not a fault, perhaps the Company would agree to make the substitution.

21. The following offer problems without an immediately foreseen solution. Of the matters herein these ONLY should be relegated to the Aeolian-Skinner's suggestion that we "live with the organ for a while" and only then on the condition that adjustments will positively be made if desired and without cost and promptly, whether involving work in the church only, or also work in the factory and even substitution of ranks of pipes. (Matters 1-20 above should NOT be so relegated.):

a. Positive Zimble may prove too high pitched or too penetrating.

b. Choir spitflöte may prove to lack sufficient flutiness, and need to be made more of a "flöte" without sacrificing useful "edge."

c. Choir Cor de Nuit may prove lacking in sufficient weight to be sufficiently versatile for its place in the over-all design. Adjustments in the foregoing 1-21 may imply other adjustments in association with them.